

What is claimed is:

1. A direct-vent fireplace assembly configurable into a top venting unit in one arrangement and configurable into a rear venting unit in another arrangement, said
5 direct-vent fireplace assembly comprising:
 - a combustion chamber;
 - a plurality of intermediate panels enclosing at least a portion of said combustion chamber, said plurality of intermediate panels including a rear panel defining a rear opening and including a top panel defining a top opening;
 - 10 a vent panel positioned exterior to said combustion chamber;
 - an outlet elbow attached to said vent panel and arranged in flow communication with said combustion chamber, a portion of said outlet elbow extending through said rear opening for achieving said rear venting arrangement and alternately said portion extending through said top opening for achieving said top venting arrangement; and
 - 15 an inlet cover plate constructed and arranged to surround a portion of the outlet elbow to define an air inlet passage, said inlet cover plate being attached to said rear panel for said rear venting arrangement or to said top panel for said top venting arrangement.
2. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 1 wherein said inlet cover plate
20 includes a mounting plate portion and a sleeve portion.
3. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 1 wherein said outlet elbow further includes a mounting plate portion and a conduit portion.
- 25 4. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 3 wherein said sleeve portion and said conduit portion are arranged substantially concentric with each other.
5. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 4 wherein said outlet elbow conduit portion includes a bent portion having an obtuse included angle.

6. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 5 wherein said rear panel and said top panel are constructed and arranged so as to be substantially perpendicular to each other.

5 7. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 6 wherein said vent panel is constructed and arranged at a generally 45 degree angle relative to said top panel and relative to said rear panel.

8. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 7 which further includes a
10 cover plate for closing off whichever opening is not used for venting.

9. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 1 wherein said sleeve portion and said conduit portion are arranged substantially concentric with each other.

15 10. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 9 wherein said outlet elbow conduit portion includes a bent portion having an obtuse included angle.

11. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 1 wherein said rear panel and said top panel are constructed and arranged so as to be substantially perpendicular to
20 each other.

12. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 11 wherein said vent panel is constructed and arranged at a generally 45 degree angle relative to said top panel and relative to said rear panel.
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13. The direct-vent fireplace assembly of claim 1 which further includes a cover plate for closing off whichever opening is not used for venting.

14. A system for increasing the velocity of exhaust gases from the combustion
30 chamber of a direct-vent fireplace comprising:
a combustion chamber;

a plurality of intermediate panels enclosing at least a portion of said combustion chamber, said plurality of intermediate panels including a rear panel defining a rear opening and including a top panel defining a top opening;

- 5 a vent panel positioned exterior to said combustion chamber, wherein said vent panel is constructed and arranged at a generally 45 degree angle relative to said top panel and relative to said rear panel; and

an outlet elbow conduit having a bent portion with an included angle of generally 135 degrees.

- 10 15. The system as described in claim 14 wherein said outlet elbow conduit extends through said rear opening for achieving a rear venting arrangement.

16. The system as described in claim 14 wherein said outlet elbow conduit extends through said top opening for achieving a top venting arrangement.